No Objection To Declassification 2009/10/08 : LOC-HAK-14-1-18-5

State Dept. review completed

INFORMATION

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

May 21, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: W. R. SMYSER

SUBJECT: Possible Hanoi Feelers for Talks With Cambodia

There have been some recent suggestions that the Communists may be interested in negotiating with the Cambodian Government. 25X1

[redacted]

In addition, Gromyko during a recent conversation with Schumann said that the Soviets were "studying" the Cambodian question and wanted to discuss it further with the French.

[redacted]

We also heard that there are many rumors in Phnom Penh over North Vietnamese efforts to establish contact with Cambodian officials. 25X1

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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One can conjecture three possible Hanoi motives:

-- To reduce pressure against them once the dry season ends (a tactic that they also usually try in Laos around this time of year).

-- To sow confusion among Cambodians during the recent political hiatus.

-- To take Cambodia out of the war in a military sense, thus essentially returning to the Sihanouk situation.

It is idle to speculate too much at this point, but we will want to keep it in mind.

The question of course arises whether the North Vietnamese would be prepared for a similar arrangement in South Vietnam. If they are, they might be prepared to go for some sort of military settlement which would remove the American factor from the war without resolving the political issue.

I think it is premature to count on this, but I shall send you a separate paper reflecting on it a little further.

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